

they make a very persuasive case for Mr. Natsios' immediate dismissal.

[From the Washington Post, June 15, 2001]

DEAD WRONG ON AIDS

(By Amir Attaran, Kenneth A. Freedberg and Martin Hirsch)

Andrew Natsios, the Bush administration's new chief of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has made a very bad start with regard to one of his agency's primary missions: dealing with the scourge of AIDS in Africa. Natsios has made comments recently on the prevention and treatment of the disease in Africa that are, to say the least, disturbing, if not alarming.

His comments appeared last week in the Boston Globe and in testimony before the House International Relations Committee. On both occasions he argued strenuously against giving antiretroviral drug treatment (the AIDS treatment used in the United States today) to the 25 million Africans infected with HIV.

Although Natsios agrees that AIDS is "decimating entire societies," when it comes to treating Africans, he says that USAID just "cannot get it done." As Natsios sees it, the problem lies not with his agency but with African AIDS patients themselves, who "don't know what Western time is" and thus cannot take antiretroviral drugs on the proper schedule. Ask Africans to take their drugs at a certain time of day, said Natsios, and they "do not know what you are talking about."

In short, he argues that there is not a great deal the agency he leads can do to help HIV-positive Africans. Under his guidance, USAID will not offer antiretroviral treatment but will emphasize "abstinence, faithfulness and the use of condoms" as the essence of HIV prevention. (He also supports distribution of a drug that blocks transmission of the disease from mother to child, and drugs to fight secondary infections.) While this might save some of those not yet infected with the virus, it in effect would condemn 25 million people to death, and their children to orphanhood.

As the administration's man in charge of international assistance, including helping Africans with AIDS, Natsios should know better. His views on AIDS are incorrect and fly in the face of years of detailed clinical experience.

Take the issue of whether AIDS should be dealt with by prevention or treatment. In backing prevention to the total exclusion of treatment, Natsios favors only modest changes in the strategies that USAID has relied on for the past 15 years, which by themselves have clearly failed to stem the pandemic. This is why expert consensus now agrees that prevention and treatment are inseparable—or, in the authoritative words of the UNAIDS expert committee, "their effectiveness is immeasurably increased when they are used together."

The same conclusion has been reached by countless other experts, including 140 Harvard faculty members who recently published a blueprint of how antiretroviral treatment could be accomplished. Harvard physicians are now treating patients in Haiti, and others are achieving similar treatment successes in Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal and Uganda.

It is also disturbing that Natsios chooses to exaggerate the difficulties of AIDS treatment, as if to singlehandedly prove it would be impossible throughout Africa. Whether Africans can tell "Western time" or not is irrelevant; nearly all antiretroviral drugs are

taken only twice a day—morning and evening. Sunrise and sunset are just as good as a watch in these circumstances. Nor is Natsios correct when he says the drugs have to be "kept frozen and all that." Not a single antiretroviral drug on the market today needs freezing. In fact, some bear warnings not to freeze them.

Natsios also said that "the problem with [delivering] antiretrovirals . . . is that there are no roads, or the roads are so poor." In fact, millions of AIDS patients live in cities such as Cape Town, Dakar or Lagos, where the streets are teeming with cars.

Natsios says that antiretroviral drugs are "extremely toxic," so that as many as "forty percent of people . . . who are HIV positive do not take the drugs . . . because they get so sick from the drugs that they cannot survive." This is a view shared by no one in the medical establishment today. Clinical and epidemiological studies by the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health have shown that these drugs are safe for most people and prolong life by many years.

Two facts are clear.

The first is that, in Abidjan and Johannesburg, as in Manhattan, AIDS prevention and treatment must go hand in hand. And we can accomplish this if the Bush administration contributes adequately to an international trust fund for that purpose (it has so far promised only \$200 million, or just 72 cents per American).

The second fact is that Andrew Natsios, by virtue of his unwillingness to acknowledge the first fact and his willingness to distort the true situation in Africa before Congress, is unfit to lead USAID and should resign.

HONORING THE COURAGE OF MELISSA HOLLEY

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 20, 2001

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor a woman that is the picture of courage, Melissa Holley. Melissa is an inspiration to all, with her determination and desire. She has overcome an enormous obstacle and although the struggle is far from over, Melissa continues to push herself.

On June 25, 2000 Melissa's life was permanently altered. Melissa was involved in a roll-over accident on U.S. Highway 550 a mile south of Ridgway, Colorado. The car damaged Melissa's vital spinal nerves and crushed two vertebrae. Melissa lost all feeling below her chest. The doctor's at St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction, Colorado said that her paralysis was irreversible. After a 48-hour search, her father, Rob Holley, found a radical new procedure that regenerates nerve cells. It was a long shot at best, but Melissa showed her courage by saying, "Only shot I had, what have I got to lose."

On July 9, 2000, Melissa was flown to the Sheba Medical Center in Tel Aviv, Israel and underwent surgery. The doctors braced her spinal cord, and injected her with microphages to promote healing. Melissa's recovery from surgery has been a slow and painful process. She continues to use a wheelchair, and exercises twice a week in a swimming pool. There

has been a visible improvement, and Melissa now stands for an hour each day. This remarkable young lady is returning to college this spring at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. Melissa has not only managed to take a long shot and turn it to her advantage, but this year she helped prepare another young man for this procedure.

Throughout this experience Melissa has managed to stay upbeat and determined. She has impressed doctors with her attitude and perseverance, and inspired many with her strength of character. Melissa has shown courage that is rare, and for that, Mr. Speaker, she deserves the praise of Congress.

A TRIBUTE TO DARIAN LEE WILLIAMS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 20, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor and tribute to Darian Lee Williams for his devotion to his community during his brief life on the occasion of the Mike Moody and Darian Williams Memorial Basketball Game.

Throughout his entire education, Darian attended public schools within the New York City School System. He graduated from Erasmus High School in 1995. Darian continued his education after high school by pursuing a degree at Manhattan Community College and most recently attended a Technical Computer Institute.

In addition to playing trumpet in the school band, Darian loved playing sports. He played basketball for the Black Men Who Care team in addition to many other out-of-school athletic programs. Darian was also a member of the Erasmus Hall High School Varsity Basketball team. Throughout high school, Darian received numerous awards and trophies for his excellence in both basketball and football.

Through his childhood friend Ernest Glover, Darian was introduced to the Mount Sinai Baptist Church. He became a member and was baptized in 1997.

"Disco" was known by his friends as having lived and enjoyed life to its fullest. He loved to socialize with his many friends and was adored by all the people who met him.

Mr. Speaker, Darian Lee Williams devoted his short life to serving his community and church. As such, both he and his family are more than worthy of receiving our recognition today. I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in remembering and honoring the life of this remarkable young man.

A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING MARTHA C. MOORE

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 20, 2001

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I commend the following article to my colleagues:

Whereas, Martha C. Moore on the 13th day of May 2001 was awarded a Doctorate of Public Service, conferred upon her by the Muskingum College Board of Trustees; and